Website Replacement Comparison

Current Website vs. Proposed Modern Website

Area 35 - area35.org
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1. Summary

The existing website is built on a legacy WordPress/Twenty Twelve architecture. This is very limiting when it comes to enhancements, and does not allow a responsive user experience. There are existing issues with wide-screen abilities and error messages at the bottom of every page. Having no support from WordPress or LinkSky (Hosting Vendor) we have been on our own to work out these issues. With the help of experienced WordPress individuals and online searches via AI (ChatGPT, Claude) we are unable to find any corrective solutions. Additionally, we experience unexplained outages (crashes) of our website. These issues were unexpected and are unacceptable.

The proposed project is a ground-up modernization using HTML, CSS and JavaScript, with the architecture and user experience designed around current requirements rather than the constraints of the legacy theme.

The objective is not simply to change the appearance of the website. The objective is to establish a cleaner, more controllable, responsive and maintainable platform that can support future growth. This new solution will allow Area 35 to better assist our Districts, Groups, and Individuals Carry the Message of Alcoholics Anonymous to the Still Suffering!

Proposed Website Introductory Cost: $3000.00 One-Time Cost, includes Analysis, Migration, and Creation
Monthly Support & Maintenance Cost: $ 50.00 Monthly Fee, includes Hosting, Security & Plug-In Updates, Uptime monitoring, and 24x7x365 Support Contract.

Compares to Current LinkSky Hosting – Annual Cost: $131.40 includes no WordPress Support
Current Office365 Monthly Maintenance Costs: $ 166.20 or $1994.40 per year

Primary objectives

- Create a modern, professional and responsive user experience.
- Eliminate legacy layout constraints, including the narrow/fixed-width presentation affecting the current site.
- Improve control over page structure, navigation, spacing, typography and interactive elements.
- Reduce unnecessary architectural complexity and dependence on legacy theme/plugin behavior.
- Establish a documented technical foundation for future enhancements.

2. Current Website — Observed Challenges

The current site has demonstrated issues associated with its legacy architecture, including layout constraints and troubleshooting that can involve WordPress templates, themes, plugins, PHP behavior and hosting configuration. These are symptoms of a platform that has accumulated dependencies over time.

Currently and historically, there has been no support available for WordPress troubleshooting of issues or for desired enhancements of existing templates, themes, or plugins.

Issues and concerns exist on limitations of pages within Themes to not be responsive or render themselves in full screen. This makes it difficult for a user to navigate throughout the website. Inconsistencies exist between rendering of pages on desktop computers, tablets, and phones making it a very poor user experience.

In addition, there is no available support which lends us virtually helpless when encountering critical issues.

The replacement proposal therefore treats modernization as an architectural project, not merely a visual redesign.

3. Current Website vs. Proposed Website

Criterion	Current WordPress Website	Proposed Modern Website
Technology foundation	Legacy WordPress/Twenty Twelve architecture	Modern HTML, CSS and JavaScript architecture designed for current requirements
Visual design	Legacy visual structure and fixed-width conventions. Non responsive	Contemporary visual system with deliberate layout, typography and spacing
Responsive design	Existing theme behavior can constrain wide-screen and mobile presentation. Non responsive	Responsive design planned from the beginning for desktop, tablet and mobile
Performance	Theme, plugins, CMS processing and legacy assets can add overhead	Lean front-end can minimize unnecessary assets and optimize loading
Security	Requires ongoing WordPress core, theme and plugin maintenance	Reduced CMS/plugin exposure when functionality is purpose-built; routine security updates provided
Maintainability	Changes can involve themes, templates, plugins and WordPress configuration. No support	Centralized, purpose-built codebase with documented components and 100% supported
Customization	Constrained by legacy theme/template architecture. No support	Greater control over page structure, interactions and visual behavior
Navigation & UX (User Experience)	Existing navigation reflects the legacy site's structure. Poor User experience	Navigation and user journeys are & can be redesigned around current or future user needs
Content presentation	Content is presented through legacy templates and styling	Content hierarchy will be redesigned for readability and engagement
Accessibility	Existing implementation should be audited and remediated	Accessibility requirements are incorporated into the new design and development process
Scalability	New capabilities may require additional WordPress components-additional costs	Architecture can be planned for future pages, features and integrations
Troubleshooting	Issues can involve WordPress core, theme, plugins, PHP and hosting. No support	Fewer architectural layers can simplify diagnosis of front-end issues. Support contract built in
Content management	Built-in CMS editing capability	Offers a strong defined content-management process or CMS when staff must edit content directly
Future development	Legacy architecture may increase effort for major changes. No support available	Modern codebase can establish reusable components and standards for future work
Ownership & control	Site behavior depends partly on WordPress/theme/plugin ecosystem	Greater direct control over markup, styling, scripts and deployment process

4. Estimated Benefits

The following are benefits based on our planning estimates. We are excited about the actual gains our Area and Districts will encounter in comparing our legacy website and the proposed website.

Benefit Area	Expected Direction	Validation
User experience	Modern, fully responsive navigation and page layouts. Compatible across desktop, tablet, and phone.	High potential; validate with stakeholder/user testing
Performance	Lean pages and optimized assets	Potentially substantial; establish baseline page-load metrics first
Maintenance	Purpose-built structure can reduce legacy-theme/plugin troubleshooting. 100% Supported by Vendor. Routine Platform and Plugin updates.	Potentially lower; depends on scope and documentation. Maintenance contract with Hosting Vendor.
Security exposure	Reduce reliance on unnecessary plugins/CMS components. SSL certificate & secure configuration. Routine Security updates.	Potentially lower attack surface; security still requires ongoing maintenance – strong security built-in and supported by Hosting Vendor.
Design flexibility	Full control over page width, spacing, typography and components	High
Future expansion	Reusable components and documented architecture	High – Additional minor enhancements built into contract (30 minutes per month) with major enhancements billed at $[rate]/hour.

Potential measurable targets

- Reduce unnecessary page assets and third-party dependencies or lack thereof.
- Establish a documented responsive layout standard across all pages.
- Achieve consistent mobile, tablet and desktop presentation again, across all pages.
- Reduce or eliminate recurring legacy-theme/template/plugin troubleshooting, and lack of support.
- Improve page structure and accessibility against an agreed checklist.
- Introduce fully functioning Forms with ability to complete filling out the form and submitting to desired recipients.
- Create reusable components so future pages do not require rebuilding the site structure.
- Managed hosting with SSL Security and daily backups.
- Routine platform, plugin, and security updates.
- Uptime monitoring and site statistics provided.
- Email support with response within one business day.
- Complete and total hosting support from new vendor.
- Analytics and SEO requirements provided by the vendor. (SEO is “Search Engine Optimization”)
- Ease of use and a best possible user experience assisting the Area in enabling Districts, Groups, and Individuals a better opportunity to perform Twelfth Step work.
- Desire to maintain and provide a website with 100% uptime outside of any schedule routine maintenance.

5. Implementation Considerations

Phase	Primary Activities	Deliverable
1. Discovery & requirements	Inventory current pages, documents, forms, links, analytics, integrations and stakeholder requirements.	Approved requirements and content inventory
2. Information architecture	Define navigation, page hierarchy and user journeys.	Sitemap and navigation approval
3. Visual design	Create responsive page designs and reusable design components.	Design approval
4. Technical architecture	Define HTML/CSS/JavaScript structure, hosting, deployment, analytics and any required CMS/data services.	Technical specification
5. Content migration	Clean, rewrite and migrate existing content; verify links and documents.	Validated content set
6. Development	Build templates/components, responsive behavior, forms/integrations and accessibility features.	Functional website
7. Testing	Test desktop/mobile, browsers, forms, links, accessibility, performance and security.	Test report and corrections
8. Launch	Set up production deployment, backups, DNS/SSL as applicable, redirects and monitoring.	Production launch
9. Post-launch	Monitor performance, errors and user feedback; document maintenance procedures.	Stabilization report

Important architectural decision

A hand-coded HTML/CSS/JavaScript site provides strong control. There will also be an Administrator's GUI for content editing which will provide the ability to add or edit pages, news, documents or forms without technical assistance.

6. Before / After Architecture

CURRENT — LEGACY ARCHITECTURE

Visitor → Hosting → WordPress Core → Theme (Twenty Twelve) → Plugins / Customizations → PHP / Database → Page Output. Existing architecture lacks support and subject matter expertise both for issues or enhancements.

PROPOSED — MODERN ARCHITECTURE

Visitor → CDN / Web Server → Optimized HTML + CSS + JavaScript → Optional APIs / Forms / Content Services

The proposed architecture removes the need for the browser-facing site to inherit the layout and behavior of a legacy WordPress theme. Any external service or content-management requirement can be deliberately selected rather than inherited. The Area will have full control and ownership of our website backed by a high standard of support and expertise.

7. Risk and Mitigation

Risk	Mitigation
Content loss or omission	Create a complete content inventory and migration checklist before development. This has been completed.
Feature regression	Document all existing forms, links, documents, integrations and workflows. This has been completed.
Loss of easy editing	Define the required content-management workflow before selecting the final architecture. The Administration interface has been agreed upon and is included.
Unexpected scope	Separate required launch features from optional enhancements.
Launch disruption	Use a staging environment, backups, testing checklist and controlled cutover.

8. Recommended Project Outcome

The desired outcome is a modern website that is visually current, responsive, accessible, fast, maintainable and easier to extend. Success should be measured against agreed requirements and baseline metrics rather than appearance alone.

The first project gate should be approval of the requirements, sitemap, design direction and technical architecture. Two rounds of revisions are included at the design stage.

Appendix A — Evaluation Checklist

- Current-page inventory completed
- Forms and integrations documented
- Documents and downloadable resources inventoried
- Analytics and SEO requirements documented (SEO is “Search Engine Optimization”)
- Accessibility requirements defined
- Mobile/responsive requirements defined
- Content editing requirements defined
- Performance baseline recorded
- Security/hosting requirements documented
- Launch and rollback procedures defined